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Theatre 2110

Rez Sisters Worksheet

1. Reflect on the importance of the character (spirit?) not seen by all the characters but seen by only one or a few of the characters and discuss that character’s importance to the dramatic action and the development of the plot.

Nanabush is a kind of ‘character’ who appears in almost every scene, almost as a part of the set. This character has no lines and merely tends to observe what is happening around him. The ‘personality’ of this character is definitely mysterious, but also a sort of comical character. This character falls under the category of one who is untraditional, and does not really have set rules within the script. The fact that most characters do not see him, leads the audience to concluding his reality on their own terms. Zhaboonigan is a character that can see him. Zhaboonigan’s mental illness further pushes this concept that maybe Nanabush is not really present, or is only present in the disabled mind’s reality. The main purpose of Nanabush is to stay in the background, and in the back of the audience’s mind as something that sets them apart from other American’s. Nanabush’s presence almost always foreshadows some sort of reveal from a character which helps the audience further understand the characters, the story, and how their history plays a huge role in where they are now.

2. Compare the aspirations and socio-economic level of the characters in this play with those in Wedding Band, Queen's Garden, and Real Women.

All three of these plays focuses around a group of women, searching for some kind of equality. In Wedding Band, Queen’s Garden, and Real Women, the main characters are striving to rise above their socioeconomic class and racial stereotypes in order to reach a higher and greater life. In The Rez Sisters, similarly, are striving for gender equality and greater socioeconomic status. All of these plays are similar in their overall message of ‘rising above adversity’. Additionally, each play revolves around women, which further expresses the idea of oppression given each play’s particular time period

.3. Compare the role of women and the depiction of men in this play with that in Real Women Have Curves

Similarly to the plays discussed in question 2, Real Women Have Curves also revolves around the lives and opinions of women. Women are the main driving force behind the story line, and all of the ‘strong characters’ portrayed are women. There is merely talk of a man, El Tormentor, in Real Women Have Curves, and even then he has no lines and is never actually seen. The women’s depictions of him through their lines are the only way the audience has to create an image of him in their minds. Men are depicted in a very negative light, especially in regards to their relations with women. The standards seemingly set by men are impossible to meet, and even if you do meet them men will only use you for sex and children. The Rez Sisters uses similar devices when referring to men. There are very few men who actually appear and speak on stage, and most are just images formed for the audience through descriptions and reactions of the women. Big Joey is the man in the play who seems to be talked about the most, yet he is only mentioned in his many affairs with women. This further elaborates on the inequality between these two groups. The lives and types of lives they live are completely separate. The influence of men is greater in this play, however they are depicted in a similar, very separate and more negative, way